

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

Gates Are Wide Open

BY ALICE & DANNY SCOTT



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DESTINATIONS

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THE PANDEMIC made many of us a bit leery of foreign travel but our nephew's wedding in Italy propelled us to cross the pond and after five weeks in four countries and 30 beds, we declare the international gates are wide open for wondrous adventures.

France

France is gourmet golf ready and prepping for the 2024 Olympics in Paris where the iconic Eiffel Tower, Louvre and Palace of Versailles are just a few of the sights to behold. Play at the Ryder Cup and Olympian venue - Le Golf National or UGolf Courson, host of the French Open Qualifiers for 12 years. Advance to other regions such as Normandy where the American Film Festival is held since 1975 and 69 movie stars are commemorated along the beach like the Hollywood walk of fame. Play "New Golf" Course on the premise of Hotel du Golf Deauville before visiting Omaha Beach for a stirring tour of the American Cemetery and World War II memorial. On 170 acres, neat rows of tidy white tombstones seem to go on for eternity. The battle of Omaha Beach is well depicted from different vantage points overlooking the now beautiful setting where sunbathers lounge and sailboats glide across the peaceful water. One such point is at Omaha Beach Golf Club. Behind the 11th green is not only a wide beach view but a bunker sans sand to experience the soldiers'

pill box. A jaw dropping stretch of Normandy beach with white chalk cliffs line the d'Etretat Golf Course which celebrated its centennial in 2008. Golfers swing with dramatic sea views from every hole. Play Golf in France is a consortium with more than 100 members, established in 2022 with the support of the French Golf Federation, to promote France to international golfers.

Italy

Italy is on the golf map as host of the 2023 Ryder Cup at the charming Marco Simone Golf Club. It is 13 kilometers from the city center of Rome where days may be spent touring the Colosseum, Vatican, Trevi, and many other historic landmarks. North of the city of Rome, in the southern tip of Tuscany, the Argentario Golf and Wellness Resort is an exceptional retreat on a promontory with magnificent mountain to sea views and the PGA National Golf Course of Italy which recently hosted the Senior Italian Open. In Tuscany's Terme di Saturnia, golf is a bonus after the turquoise thermal pools bubbling up on site and passing through to the famous Cascades. More north, Castelconturbia has three nines designed by Robert Trent Jones Senior running through the woods below the Swiss Alps, freshly frosted with snow in the fall. In the northwest a daring ascent to the altiplano, with steep u turn curves on a narrow road and fast traffic leads to Golf

Club Asiago and the sweet Meltar Boutique Hotel. The alpine course plays through an Italian forest opening to a pasture with Asiago cheese making cows as mountains and the village with steeples, spires, and World War One memorial loom large in the background. Venice is a romantic setting with a maze of canals and city streets leading to St. Mark's Square or Piazza San Marco, lit at night with overwhelming grandeur as little orchestras strike an emotional chord. When you play at Veneto Golf Course you are glamorously chauffeured on a polished wood, water taxi. Some warn against Venice in the summer due to heat and congestion but our one night in October was unforgettable.

Slovenia

Slovenia is next door to Italy and a favorite of Europeans, where everyone speaks English. Royal Bled Golf Club has pristine 18-hole and 9-hole courses with snowcapped mountain and castle views. Guests are treated like royalty. Lake Bled, an e-bike ride away, is one of the most photographed spots on earth.

Ireland

Ireland is a golf mecca delivering lilted welcomes, links and laughs. You can't go wrong in any direction. We've traveled the Wild Atlantic Way with North and West Coast Links Golf Ireland and recommend Ardglass, carved around capes of waves with views of



Hotel du Golf Deauville



Royal Bled Golf Club



Ballyliffin